

JUN 14 1935

DRAMA

A MONTHLY RECORD OF THE THEATRE
IN TOWN AND COUNTRY
AT HOME & ABROAD



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DRAMA

VOL 13

JUNE MCMXXXV

NUMBER 9

THE JOURNAL OF THE BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE

PLAYS OF THE MONTH

By E. A. Baughan

APRIL ended brilliantly in its last week with two uncommon productions. To the professional critic "uncommon" may be used to describe a play which he can remember. Elaborate action and the scenery necessary for it fade from the memory, whereas a fine piece of acting and some basic idea of originality remain fresh as when the play was recently produced.

That is the case with Jacques Deval's "Tovarich" (Lyric Theatre, April 24) as Englished by Robert Sherwood. In the first place Eugenie Leontovich, as the Archduchess Tatiana Petrovna, acted with an eloquent grace, making a live character of the conventional Russian grandee who has been reduced to earn her living as a lady's maid in Paris or New York. Cedric Hardwicke as Prince Mikail, her husband, was not quite as successful. The Prince is drawn as an easy-going, flippant aristocrat. Hardwicke made him rather too complacent and self-possessed, probably as a foil to the vital Archduchess.

That the Prince who had been made the trustee of a large sum of money in the Bank of France which belonged to the dead Czar should resolutely refuse to draw out any of it although he and his wife were so impoverished that she steals their food in the market is a good idea, for it not only shows the patriotism of the exile but enables the humour of the situation to seem real. Much to their annoyance they discover that the Archduchess's thefts are well known to the bank.

It is left to the Commissar Gorotchenko to persuade the Prince that the Czar himself would have spent the money in helping his peasants to buy machinery to supply their means of living. The Commissar's little

lecture on the Soviet's desire to carry out some of Plato's ideas was admirably delivered by Francis L. Sullivan. The whole play is remarkably well acted, and most of its scenes remain vividly in my mind.

"1066 and All That" at the Strand (April 25) had already been seen at the Hampstead Embassy Theatre. This "revue" by Reginald Arkell founded on the well-known skit has enough wit and invention for half-a-dozen revues of commerce. "Dancing City" at the Coliseum (April 26) is one of those elaborate musical plays of which one remembers scarcely anything after the lapse of a month. The costumes and decorations of Vienna of the days of Marie Louise fill the eye and Lea Seidl sings well and is a graceful and dignified figure as the Empress who bans the waltz at her court. Some alterations in the cast have been made since the first night and they are said to be to the good.

"All Rights Reserved" at the Criterion (April 30) by a new author, N. C. Hunter, brought Ronald Squire back to the stage in a part that suited his peculiar gifts as comedian.

That takes my survey of capital productions to the end of April. May began well with Laurence Housman's "Victoria Regina" at the Gate Theatre (May 1). This selection from the author's plays on Queen Victoria cannot be performed on a stage which has to be licensed by the Lord Chamberlain. That is a pity because it really gives a better idea of the Queen's power, personality and humanity than any ordinary patriotic play could give.

There have been several "big" productions during the month, notably "Glamorous Night" at Drury Lane (May 2), "The Flying Trapeze" at the Alhambra (May 4), "The Miracle Man"

PLAYS OF THE MONTH

at the Victoria Palace (May 13), and "Hervey House" at His Majesty's (May 17).

Drury Lane has not had a play more suited to its enormous stage than Ivor Novello has devised for it, but most of the big scenes do not grow out of the plot which, to tell the truth, is not strong enough for the production. Ivor Novello has not only devised the play and written the music but acts the principal character. To do all this competently is certainly a *tour de force*. "The Flying Trapeze" at the Alhambra is one of Erik Charill's characteristic productions which invariably endeavour to make an audience forget it is in a theatre. This time the stage is a veritable circus and a real circus programme is performed including Ivy St. Helier as an *equestrienne* on a real horse. Part of the audience objected to June Clyde but no one knows why. What was more important on the first night was that Jack Buchanan has not a part that suits him. However there was no doubt that he could work it into something more worthy of his talents.

"The Miracle Man" is Seymour Hick's version of a play which has been very successful in America and was very popular as a film in the "silent" days. It is good, straightforward melodrama with a strain of mystical faith-healing running through it. Certain types of audiences are impressed by that. I am not.

"Hervey House" at His Majesty's Theatre, by C. R. Avery (Jane Cowl) attempts something more ambitious than either "Glamorous Night" or "The Miracle Man." It seeks to trace the social changes from 1891 to this year of grace with Hervey House as the home of a liberal Duke. The war is hardly touched upon—for which I owe the author many thanks. She owes some of her inspiration to other plays, but is original in her picture of the changes in social and political life. Fay Compton as the Duchess who is broad-minded enough to tolerate her husband's lover (played by Gertrude Lawrence) because she can give him what he needs in the way of political inspiration has done a fine piece of work, and the play as a whole is well acted. It shows every sign of being very popular and deserves its success.

"Roulette" at the Duke of York's (May 21) is a play which sails closer than is safe to the wind. Hella Kurty as a young bride who revenges herself on her husband's neglect by seeking and finding an adventure, had

grace, youth and freshness. But these qualities seemed to me to be assumed. The part really requires a Bergner which Hella Kurty is not.

In looking back on the month's productions I give the prize to "The Mask of Virtue" (Ambassadors, May 13). Ashley Dukes has made an English version of Carl Sternheim's play which has the literary distinction so rare in our theatre. I note that several critics have complained that the dramatic change from artificiality in the last act does not ring true, but it did not so strike me. A new young actress, Vivien Leigh, created quite a sensation on the first night. She deserved all the praise heaped on her, but she must learn how to use her voice with more effect. Madge Pemberton's "The King of Rome," a new play on Napoleon's "Eaglet," was produced at a *matinée* at the Royalty Theatre (May 14). It is a remarkable achievement and should be put into the evening bill of a commercial theatre. An outstanding success was made by Peter Croft as the Duke of Reichstadt.

ROCHDALE.

The Curtain Theatre, Rochdale, whose work is so well known in the North of England, has just completed its tenth season. Four full length plays have been presented, namely "Fear" by A. Afinogenev, "The Liar" of Goldoni, Mr. Karel Capek's "The Macropulos Secret" and "Triad, Comedies of Love" by Mr. Helge Krog, the first and last plays for the first time in England. "Fear" was described in the *Manchester Guardian's* review as "an epitome of the new Russia," while Mr. Krog's play is representative of the work of a distinguished Norwegian dramatist whose work deserves to be more widely known here. It was beautifully translated by Mr. Roy Campbell.

As usual, the settings were designed by Mr. Harold Hemingway, and executed by the Curtain Theatre.

CIVIL SERVICE DRAMA COMPETITION.

There were five competitors for the Sir Russell Scott Cup at the Birkbeck College Theatre on April the twelfth, and a very high standard was reached by the winning entry—the G.P.O. Players who gave us the second act of Bernard Shaw's "Major Barbara" and are to be congratulated on taking full advantage of their dramatic and humorous opportunities. Beautifully produced, and acted with feeling and vitality, this company deserves all possible credit for a fine piece of work. The adjudicators had the house enthusiastically with them in their award.

We regret that in the list of entries to the Festival printed in the last issue of "Drama," the Vanbrugh Players were reported as having entered "Stars" by George Paston. The name of the author should have been Traviss Gill.

AN ADJUDICATOR HAS HIS SAY

by John Bourne

AS the grouse season in the festival preserves is now in full swing, I crave audience to present the case for the adjudicators who are being shot at.

Adjudicators, of course, are not human; they are fair game for the big guns on committees and the little guns among the Great Defeated. Having spread their wings they must be prepared for the firing. With this admission, I would leave the field of simile and inquire whether the malcontents have ever tried to put themselves in the place of these men and women who, for a comparatively small fee, travel many miles to the festivals and try to separate the good from the bad in dramatic work. Do adjudicators have *quite* such a good time as is credited to them? Are they always helped (by the very committees who adversely and secretly report on them to H.Q.) to give of their best? And, presuming they fail to give complete satisfaction (as is inevitable in the opinion of all the teams they do not applaud) are they anything like as incompetent as many of the people with whom they have to deal? For many years adjudicators have gone their rounds uncomplaining of the conditions under which they work, and I do not know of a single instance where an adjudicator has "reported" a local organisation to H.Q.; yet those conditions are frequently such as to militate against the success of what is, after all, an important item on a festival programme.

It is not my intention to emphasise the fact that night after night an adjudicator may have to sit through performances that try his patience beyond words and leave him wrestling with himself as to what he can possibly say that is true, yet will not give offence. Most adverse criticism, it should be remembered, is mild in comparison with what could be said if the *whole* truth were told. Over and over again members of the audience will whisper to the adjudicator as he leaves the hall "I wish I had your tact"; yet afterwards there will be nagging letters and complaints from the teams of his severity on that occasion. Those complaints sometimes take very curious forms. One's hostess, if she has been taking part that evening, will perhaps adopt the "freezing" attitude, or she may invite a round dozen of disgruntled people in to supper

during which the adjudicator is baited until 1 a.m. The more usual method is to extol the virtues of last year's adjudicator, who, one finds later, suffered the same treatment. Another trick is sometimes played before the performance when one is bountifully fed to an accompaniment of subtle "instruction" about the teams, the hall, and the plays.

During the actual progress of a festival, it might be assumed, the adjudicator is comparatively happy. Yet that is not always so. I have seen over 1,000 performances of one-act plays, yet only on three occasions have I been provided with an efficient light with which to write notes for a half-hour speech. Either the wretched thing has to be put out because it blinds the people behind, or the battery gives out, or it won't work at all. Occasionally one is asked not to use a light as it irritates the players. In many cases no light is available—hence I now always carry my own specially-constructed torch. Sometimes, no table is provided and one has to sit in the middle of a tight row of seats with a muddle of marking sheets and copies of plays, while one's neighbours chatter and spy from all angles. The anxiety of people to overlook the adjudicator is, indeed, remarkable. I have even had the experience (when sitting in the front row of a "circle") of several people at the back scrutinising my sheets through opera glasses! Now and then, the organiser of a festival will insist on sitting next to the adjudicator, overlooking his work the whole time and trying to influence him by yawns, applause and semi-audible comments on the plays.

Direct attempts at influence, I admit, are rare. But I have known a festival organiser, who was also the author and producer of a play, tell me as he conducted me to the stage for the spoken adjudication: "I know my play wasn't too good; but don't say too much about the production—rub it in to the cast." Feeble excuses, however, are very common. Adjudicators are frequently told: Don't say anything about our lighting set; don't criticise our curtains; the play is by the vicar's wife—and she's present; forgive Kathryn Howard in "The Rose Without a Thorn" for wearing eye-glasses; we couldn't get a sofa; we never bother about the time limit; please don't penalise the second team because the

AN ADJUDICATOR HAS HIS SAY

policeman's part was read; please make allowances for our team not being able to get to rehearsal in this hall; please note that we've deleted two of the characters in the play; and so on. These injunctions are generally transmitted *via* a member of the committee, or by little notes. I have mentioned them, not unsympathetically, but merely to emphasise the added difficulties of an adjudicator's job.

In far too many festivals, there are flagrant breaches of the rules, which local committees urge the adjudicator to overlook—and complain about him if he doesn't. For example, I have several times been asked practically to ignore "stage presentation" since the local committee has decided that all teams must use the same furniture and must not bring their own.

In addition to all these considerations it frequently happens that the organiser has forgotten the marking sheets, no copies of the plays are available, the programme is incomplete, and—worst of all—the festival starts so late and is so lengthy that the adjudicator is expected to be at his best when he goes on the stage at 11 p.m. just as the audience is beginning to think of last buses and trains.

In this connection, garrulous chairmen and organisers are largely to blame. It is a difficult thing to "hold" an audience which, having sat through five plays, has tolsten to a self-admiration society and long-winded details about the festival before the adjudicator is allowed to speak. And frequently the teams who live at a distance, never hear the adjudication!

Correspondence before and after the festivals is often voluminous and confusing. You must write to this person about that, and that person about this. In some areas reports must include marks; in other areas they mustn't. In one festival you must announce the marks from the platform; in another the winning teams are never given any marks. Elsewhere you must make an analysis; and so on, *ad lib*.

I have no space left adequately to deal with "hospitality"—which means so much to an adjudicator's good temper. Most of this is generous and happy and I have found much good fellowship and made many good friends. But there is the other kind, and we still seem to have a fair proportion of curious and tactless people connected with the movement. I think of the spiritualists who put me in the attic because there was a "presence" there at midnight; of the food cranks who fed me on nuts, raisins, and hot water; of one of two

damp beds; of grubby little back-street hotels, chosen because they were "homely and quiet" (and no doubt extremely cheap).

If an adjudicator is in a town for two or three days and receiving hospitality he is completely at the mercy of the local organisers. He will oblige, won't he, by attending a rehearsal of a full-length play by the "crack" society (too busy to enter the Festival)? Then, since he has so much time on his hands during the mornings, perhaps he would very kindly read one or two plays written by committee members and the like? His advice on the possibility of a pageant is sought, and Mrs. Blankety-Dash hopes he will go to tea because she wants to discuss the formation of a play-reading circle. That "tea" is probably his only meal till midnight. Verily the adjudicator earns his keep.

My object in writing this article is not to conjure up before your eyes a type of man who is "difficult" or wants to be treated as a god, but to suggest that adjudicators are not always treated with the respect due to them, and which would lead to much happier relations. Very often the adjudicator is regarded as the least important person present. Although not human, adjudicators have a right to expect at least equal treatment with the teams in matters of organisation, and greater appreciation of the delicacy of the job they have undertaken. Most of the people who adjudicate on the adjudicator have less knowledge of theatrical affairs than he has, and would make a sorry mess of his job if they had it to do. On the whole, adjudicators do their job a good deal better than the people who criticise them; and, when all is said and done, there is plenty of evidence that most audiences enjoy the average adjudication better than the average performance! None of the good organisers and committees and teams and hostesses will need to take my words to heart; and there are many such. They will probably think that much of my article is incredible; yet every line of it is written from personal experience.

Would I give up the work? No I would not. There are more good times than bad, and I hope I have a sense of humour.

At the Arts Theatre, London, on Tuesday and Wednesday, June 18th and 19th, with a matinee on the Wednesday, three performances of "Anne" by Lechmere Worrall, will be given on behalf of the Greater London Fund for the Blind. Tickets may now be booked at the Theatre.



SCENE FROM "VICTORIA REGINA" BY
LAURENCE HOUSMAN. A TENT ON THE
LAWN AT BALMORAL. PAMELA STANLY
AS QUEEN VICTORIA, ANDREW CRUIK-
SHANK AS JOHN BROWN. PRODUCED
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STAGE LIGHTING AND THE PRODUCER

By Robert Newton

IT is widely believed that stage lighting, as something more than the mere lighting of the stage, is a modern innovation. This is not the case. M. Komisarjevsky, in his new book on the theatre, tells us that Sebastiano Serlio in about 1540 wrote in great detail of stage lighting, and described "specially made bottles containing coloured liquids, which were to be placed behind the scenes and in front of lighted lamps and of torches to serve as projectors and as side "lights." Mr. C. Harold Ridge, in his "Stage Lighting," writes:—"I should like to remark in passing that some of the gas lighting, particularly by Irving, compared favourably with much electric lighting seen on the London stage to-day."

Nevertheless the introduction of electricity into the theatre opened up new possibilities for stage-lighting; and now with the rapid development of mechanical apparatus there are very few effects, both realistic and suggestive, which can not be achieved in the theatre. It is, of course, a commonplace to state that the greater the resources at the disposal of anyone, the greater are the opportunities for mistakes. The almost frightening possibilities opened to a producer by modern stage-lighting is no exception to this.

How frequently on my rounds of adjudication have I observed—with dejection—the lack of any attempt to light a play which depended for its effect very largely on that kind of atmosphere which only stage lighting can create. Yet deep down inside me I have sometimes rejoiced; because you have only to fit up a young company with a decent lighting set and they become fascinated by it. Their new toy is so intriguing that, when it comes to putting on a new play, more important factors, such as rhythm in the production and careful characterization in the acting, are ignored in favour of a stage splashed with amber, red and green. The reasons for this are obvious. In the first place, although it is difficult to light a play well, it is not difficult to make pretty light patterns on the stage by placing different mediums in front of "spots" or "floods." Secondly in executing colour patterns you are working visually more

than anything else, whereas in carrying out the tempo of a production you are working aurally, and perhaps even—for want of a better word—spiritually. The latter is, of course, more exacting. There are other reasons, but as these do not show up the theatrical temperament to advantage, I will ignore them! Please do not think that I despise stage lighting and think that the masterpieces of dramatic literature should be performed upon a bare stage. Far from it I enjoy playing about with coloured mediums as much as anyone: in fact I was once crowned the Gelatine King by Miss Diana Christie when she was stage-managing for me. It is precisely because I have wasted so much time at dress rehearsals, playing about with "spots" and "floods" that I know just how infectious stage-lighting can be.

The importance given to stage-lighting is mainly a question of proportion in the individual mental attitude towards the theatre. Let us face this fundamental fact. The best plays performed by the best actors, will get over in spite of an indifferent decors and flat stage-lighting, the corollary is also scarcely true. No bad play, indifferently acted, will hold the attention of an audience for long, if it has to depend upon the ever-changing tints thrown upon a cyclorama. This statement may be too sweeping, perhaps it is; but there is truth in it. I would add that once producers have assimilated the essential principles it contains, they should use stage-lighting as much as they can in the general interpretation of the plays which they are producing.

THE LONDON MIME FESTIVAL.

The first London Mime Festival will be held at the Portland Hall, Polytechnic Extension Buildings, Little Titchfield Street, W.1., on Saturday, June 22nd at 2.30 p.m. The adjudicators will be Miss Gertrude Pickersgill, author of "Mimed Ballads and Stories," "Practical Miming," etc., and Mr. J. Compton. The syllabus will include classes for Children and Adults in Mimed Songs, Ballads, Stories, Plays.

A syllabus will be sent (postage half-penny) on application to The Honorary Secretary, London Mime Festival, 17, Berners Street, W.1.

BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE NOTES



THE JOURNAL OF
THE BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE
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Telephone: TEMPLE BAR 8507-8.

Neither the Editor nor the Drama League as a whole accepts any responsibility for the opinions expressed in signed articles printed in this Journal.

WE have withheld the issue of this Number of "Drama" so as to include in it a record—even if it be but a formal one—of the Final of the British Drama League Festival, which took place at the Old Vic on the evening of Monday, May 27. The result will be found in the section dealing with the Festival in the Annual Report of the League which is printed on another page. The success of the Welwyn Thaliens was generally applauded, and our best thanks are due to the judges, Mr. Lewis Casson and Mr. Tyrone Guthrie, for their particularly full and careful adjudication. For the first time in the history of the Festival the theatre was completely crowded, this being largely due to the fact that it was held in the evening rather than in the afternoon as heretofore. With the growth of the Festival the competitive spirit has also become more in evidence, and this perhaps is a development which needs watching. In presenting the Howard de Walden Cup to the winners, Miss Fora Robson spoke some wise words on this subject.

Notice of the Annual General Meeting will be sent to all members, according to our rules, not less than two weeks before the date is

fixed. We hope that the meeting will synchronise with the opening of the new premises at 9, Fitzroy Square, W.1. The date will be selected as soon as possible. In the meanwhile, we have to announce that the normal Library service will be suspended from Monday, June 10, until the end of the month. We shall be sorry if inconvenience is caused by this closure, but we have no doubt that borrowers from the Library will realise that it is inevitable. The removal of nearly 30,000 volumes from one house to another is in itself a big undertaking. In the present instance it is complicated by the necessity of taking down the existing shelves and building them up again elsewhere, with such modifications as may be necessary to make them fit their new surroundings. We hope to carry on the ordinary work of the League as usual throughout the period of the move. Here again we must crave the indulgence of members for any delays which may be unavoidable.

On the day following our own Festival performance an event occurred of the greatest importance in the world of the theatre - the matinée at Drury Lane given in honour of Miss Marie Tempest whose Stage Jubilee occurred during the same week. This matinée proved an unqualified success, and the large proceeds are being given to St. George's Hospital for the foundation of a special wing for the benefit of patients belonging to the theatrical profession. The British Drama League paid its tribute in the following telegram which was despatched to Miss Tempest from the Festival audience amid general acclamation: "From the Old Vic The British Drama League Community Theatre Festival sends this message of homage and gratitude."

We are glad to announce that we have arranged for a second Drama League Tour in connection with the Moscow Theatre Festival at the end of August. The Tour will leave London on August 25th under the leadership of Mr. Lewis Casson and (if her engagements permit) of Dame Sybil Thorndike. A prospectus of the Tour is being circulated to members, and following last year's experience, we are able heartily to recommend this opportunity to those who would like to get a personal view of one of the most interesting dramatic movements of the day.

RECENT BOOKS

Reviewed by F. Sladen Smith

"A Pageant of the Dance and Ballet." By Mark E. Perugini. Jarrolds. 18s.

"The Theatre." By Malcolm Morley. Pitman. 5s.

"Theatre Guyed." By A. E. Wilson. Methuen. 6s.

"The Dramatic Art of La Compagnie Des Quinze." By Phyllis Aykroyd. Partridge. 2s. 6d.

"Modern Make-up for Stage and Screen." By N. E. B. Wolters. Lovat Dickson. 3s. 6d.

"A History of Everyday Things in England." By Marjorie & C. H. B. Quennell. Batsford. 8s. 6d.

"Three Plays." By Lion Feuchtwanger. Secker. 6s.

"Five New Full-Length Plays for All-Women Casts." Lovat Dickson. 5s.

"More Plays." By Lennox Robinson. Macmillan. 5s.

"Storm Song" and "A Bride for the Unicorn." By Denis Johnston. Cape. 6s.

"Prometheus Bound." Translated by Gilbert Murray. Allen & Unwin. 2s.

"The Seven Against Thebes." Translated by Gilbert Murray. Allen & Unwin. 3s.

"The One-Act Theatre." The Fourth Book. French. 2s. 6d.

"Whitehall, 1656." By H. F. Rubinstein. Favil Press. 1s.

"Immortal Garden." By H. C. G. Stevens. Muller. 2s. 6d.

"Invitation to the Play." In three parts. Compiled by Mary Cousins. Part 1, 1s. Parts 2 & 3, 1s. 3d. each.

"Everybody's Marionette Book." By H. W. Whanslaw. Wells, Gardner and Dalton. (No price given.)

MR. MARK EDWARD PERUGINI, at the end of his long book "A Pageant of the Dance and Ballet," describes it as "a faithful chronicle which may have novelty . . . a friendly reminder of happy hours . . ."

It is a good, if modest, description. Novelty is there in the amusing, romantic or extraordinary anecdotes of famous dancers and ballets of which the book is full: friendly reminders there are, also, in plenty—to read the latter portion of the book is to re-live what for some of us were childhood experiences. But, apart from the charm of many of the descriptions and the author's almost invariable refusal to dwell on any aspect of the dance and its exponents other than the glamorous and the fortunate—nearly all the ballets he describes appear to have been huge successes!—it is an extremely comprehensive survey from the earliest times down to the present.

Mr. Malcolm Morley's book "The Theatre" is a series of essays on various aspects of the problems of the stage, age-long or transitory. Some of the titles of the chapters will indicate the scope of the book—"The Dramatist. Fashions in Plays. The Provincial Path. Art and Acting. The Producer" and so forth. To each facet of his subject Mr. Morley brings a mind filled with knowledge and enthusiasm, with the result that the book, although containing nothing particularly startling, is consistently interesting and informative. Mr. W. R. H. Johnson's illustrations are amusing. "Theatre Guyed" is a collection of skits by Mr. A. E. Wilson, some of them brilliant, most of them enter-

taining if, one may hazard a guess, somewhat hastily written. Mr. Wilson dearly hates a high-brow, and is at his best describing high-brow enterprises (always an easy target for the humorist), but he is also devastating on Musical Comedy and the Opera. Here again, the illustrations add to the enjoyment, especially the one showing the Russian drama in full spate.

It is good to have a book devoted to the art of La Compagnie des Quinze, but from Miss Phyllis Aykroyd's essay on the work of this famous company we can learn little except the ideals and events which brought it into being, and the fact that it is now about to blossom forth once more. There are short descriptions of some of the famous productions, but it is to be hoped that soon a more comprehensive work will do justice to this remarkable reaction from one of the most conservative theatrical traditions in the world.

Make-up is well known to be a complicated and awkward subject to write about with any hope of clarity, but Mr. N. E. B. Wolters has achieved this difficult task with marked success. His book "Modern Make-up for Stage and Screen" is both valuable and, strangely enough, enjoyable to read. Another unusual feature is that the illustrations, instead of being wretchedly drawn sketches, are excellent photographs of artists such as Sir Cedric Hardwicke in various character parts. The chart showing suitable make-up for fifteen different types is interesting. The fourth part of "A History of Everyday Things in England" should be useful for producers and designers. The period, 1851 to 1934 is a long one, but most plays belong to it, and it is often easier to devise costumes and properties for early periods than for those close to our own.

Herr Lion Feuchtwanger's three plays form a remarkable volume of which the chief characteristic appears to be vivid craftsmanship illuminating abject misery. In the last, "The Dutch Merchant," a more lively note is struck at first, only to be quenched by the treacherous Henning, whose appalling hostility to the arresting and vital Daniel Raule (a finely drawn character) is never satisfactorily explained. "Prisoners of War" remorselessly depicts a war-time tragedy of the love of a well-to-do German girl for an attractive and worthless French prisoner. The chief play in the book is the enormous "1918," a "dramatic novel," presenting, in innumerable short scenes, a detailed picture of Germany before, during and immediately after the war.

"Five New Full-Length Plays for All-Women Casts" is a book in which, despite various authors, there is remarkable similarity of outlook and subject. In each the thought behind the play is admirably sane and forceful, but, with perhaps one exception, the simple "Waac" play, "Angels of War," the construction is faulty and long discussions hold up the action. But the plays have scarcely an uninteresting or badly drawn character, many of the scenes are absorbing, and, to mention only one writer, in "This Bondage" Miss Olive Popplewell shows that her powers are steadily increasing.

Two of the volumes of plays are by Irish dramatists—Mr. Lennox Robinson and Mr. Denis Johnston: both contain one play of the normal type and one essay in more experimental forms. In "All's Over, Then?"

RECENT BOOKS

Mr. Robinson gives a study of a mother loathing her daughter because of the father's evident affection; an unpleasant enough situation resulting in attempted murder and then suicide. After this, "Church Street," with its ingenious if unsatisfying method of showing the private sorrows and anxieties of the guests at a party, comes as a distinct relief, despite the tragedies in the lives of nearly all present. Mr. Johnston is in great form in his two plays. "Storm Song" is a vivid picture of a film director and his staff laboriously making a picture on a remote Irish island. In the second, "A Bride for the Unicorn," the author sets out to have a characteristic revel, but, surprisingly enough, insists that it is not an expressionist or constructivist one. Mr. Johnston, of course, knows what it is all about; not many others will be in this happy position, even if, with the utmost labour, they manage to follow the main idea.

The two translations of Aeschylus by Professor Gilbert Murray are as stirring, as amazingly vital as ever. "Prometheus Bound" was first published in 1931, but "The Seven Against Thebes"—which contains the unforgettable picture of the city of Thebes in extreme peril—is new. Both plays contain a short but admirable preface. The fourth book of "The One-Act Theatre" is a great improvement on its predecessors and contains six well-contrasted plays. The delightful light comedy, "Heaven on Earth," by Mr. Philip Johnson, and Mr. N. K. Smith's typical essay in fantasy, "Budge, Budge Not," are, possibly, the most outstanding, while "Two Ladies of Florence"

by Mr. T. B. Morris is the least distinctive, but all are worth production. "Whitehall, 1656" is one more grave and finished study in one-act form by Mr. H. F. Rubinstein of the struggles and tribulations of the Jewish race—this time dealing with their establishment in the England of Oliver Cromwell, of whom there is an interesting portrait.

There are some who will think "Immortal Garden" a beautiful play and be uplifted by its sermon on immortality. Its basic idea is, indeed, sincere and moving.

"Invitation to the Play" in three volumes aims at the fostering of the love and practice of drama in children from the very young to those of comparatively riper years, and in its turn is designed to lead up to three volumes of modern plays in another series. It begins with little rhymes and poems and then simple plays and mimes—some of the best being by Miss Eleanor Farjeon despite a slight tendency towards the melancholy. In the last book the plays take greater shape and form and some, the excellent "The Torn-Out Page" by Miss Vera I. Arlett and "The Travelling Man" by Lady Gregory, require a definite amount of technique in the players.

Mr. H. W. Whanslaw in "Everybody's Marionette Book" shows again his expert knowledge of a subject which is steadily increasing in popularity. He gives complete instructions as to the making and managing of a puppet show, being particularly clear and informative on the problem of controls and strings, always a matter for interested speculation on the part of the layman.

NEWS FROM NORTH AND SOUTH

WALES.

AREA FINAL FOR WELSH PLAYS.

The Welsh Area of the British Drama League holds two Festivals annually—one for English plays in connection with the National Community Theatre Festival and the second for Teams staging plays in Welsh.

Interest in this latter Festival is rapidly growing and this year 25 teams took part in the Preliminary Rounds as a result of which Mr. E. J. Phillips, the adjudicator sent forward the following Teams to the Area Final.

Garriek (Mid-Rhondda)	in "Y Gwanwyn"
Maerdy	in "Adar o'r Unlliw"
Gwenfro (Wrexham)	in "Trychineb y Chwiriorydd"
Penmaenmawr	in "Unigrwydd"

The Area Final was staged at the Town Hall, Maesteg, on May 11th, when Miss Mary Hughes, M.A., of Swansea adjudicated. After a very keen competition which was witnessed by a large and enthusiastic audience Miss Hughes awarded the place of honour to the Garriek Team which gave an exceedingly fine performance of "Y Gwanwyn." Mrs. C. P. Williams, the Area Chairman, presented the Lord Howard de Walden Bowl to Mrs. Matt Lewis, the Producer of the Garriek Team.

The attention of Welsh speaking teams is particularly called to this Festival which is conducted in accordance

with the Rules of the National Community Theatre Festival of the British Drama League.

THE JANUS PLAYERS in "THE MATRIARCH."

On Friday, May 10th, the Janus Players gave an interesting and highly creditable performance of "The Matriarch," by G. B. Stern. The prologue was unfortunately marred by insufficient attack and a general tendency to the confidential, with the result that it lost much of its value as an introduction to the play. Despite this inauspicious opening, the three acts of the play were remarkably well played; and although, in certain scenes, there was a noticeable slackening of pace, the interest of the theme was well maintained.

The production was distinguished by several notable character studies; the male characters of Danny Maitland, Isaac Cohen and Maximilian Rakonitz being especially prominent. Of the female roles, the Wanda Rakonitz of Miss Beryl Cooke was an effective piece of work, ably conceived and splendidly portrayed. The chief honours of the evening, however, undoubtedly went to Miss Gertrude M. Pickersgill, not only for her fine portrayal of the Matriarch, Anastasia Rakonitz, but for her imaginative and highly skilled production.

NEWS FROM NORTH AND SOUTH

THE NEW THEATRE-CAMP AT WEST WRATTING MILL.

AN INTERESTING EXPERIMENT.

A Theatre-Camp upon a hill around a 200 years old Windmill in Cambridgeshire, only 50 miles from London, between Cambridge, Newmarket and Saffron Walden is to be inaugurated where new and vital plays will be produced and where a camp will be set up for those who come long distances and would enjoy not only drama of the highest order but would escape from the towns to the health and beauty of the countryside.

In this, the first year, the powerful collaboration of Mr. Joseph Gordon Macleod of the Festival Theatre Cambridge has been obtained and a new and most impressive play by Philippa Burrell entitled "The Wind and the Mill" will be produced by him and played by his company at West Wrating on the nights of June 20th, 21st, and 22nd. The Cambridge Morris Men will precede the performance in a programme of dancing.

This is a project from which much will come—further details are on another page.

THE SELO PLAYERS

The Players are to be congratulated upon their choice of the play "By Candle Light," and upon their performance of it. We were entertained with witty dialogue and amusing situations played freshly and with vivacity. The production as a whole would have gained by a somewhat "crisper" interpretation and by the introduction of a more cynical feeling; the speed could have been varied more frequently and considerably increased at crucial moments, the love themes could have been taken with a little more "abandon," but on the whole the true spirit of comedy was well preserved and there was a cohesion about the production which gave it a very convincing look. Except for one character, none of the actors slipped into farce—or, at least, not into broad farce. Miss Cooper's Elizabeth was charming, but the actress did not sustain her long part with quite that evenness which is necessary. The same was to an extent true of Mr. Cooper as Bastien whose "facial" acting was especially good. The outstanding performance however, was that of Mr. Baines as the Baron. This actor played with a clarity and subtlety which we do not often meet on the amateur stage and showed himself to be an excellent technician as well as a very pleasant stage personality. It will be very interesting to watch the progress of so promising a company.

G. E. MIDDLEDITCH.

EXETER DRAMA LEAGUE.

After a year's work that has included an excellent production of "Tobias and the Angel," a most diverting "White-headed Boy" and two original plays, Exeter Drama League has completed its fifteenth season by realising the dream of all good amateurs and playing "Hamlet."

This seems to have caused something of a sensation locally but being beyond the range of official critics we can only record the slickness of the production and express our gratitude for the sensitive and convincing Hamlet of Mr. John Lloyd.

We gave a dress rehearsal to the Elementary Schools of the City, thus giving most of them their first sight of a Shakespeare play, and securing a crowded audience to which the Grave-diggers' jokes were new, which was actually afraid of the Ghost and within an ace of hissing Claudius.

To the Editor of "Drama."

DEAR SIR,

This year for the third or fourth time I have read of or heard adjudicators in the Drama Festival condemning Dialect in plays performed, confessing their total ignorance of Dialect, justifying the deduction of marks because the play was not in standard English, and urging that plays should be "as readily understood in Bournemouth as in Lancashire."

I believe that such adjudicators are working definitely against the declared policy of the British Drama League, and against the best interests of Village Drama.

At the Hull Conference in 1931 the B.D.L. decided to help the preservation of Dialect by making gramophone records of every representative British folk-speech. The laborious work is almost completed at a cost of over £300.

Useful as this is, it is vastly less significant than the work that village players are doing in dialect performances in which every word and vowel sound is faithfully rendered, not as an acquired art, but because for them Dialect is the language of heart and home, the language of freedom, whereas standard English is that of constraint.

If we who live in rural districts are to love Drama, and not merely take a "fond-clever" interest in it, we must feel that it is a thing not artificial, but homely, made out of the same stuff as the tragedy and comedy of our own surroundings.

If the adjudicators' difficulty with dialect proceeds from ignorance they should study the League's gramophone records and the written copies of the dialect plays they are to hear. If it is merely a pose they should drop it as most unfortunate in its depressing effect upon dialect-speaking players and contrary to the community spirit of the Festival.

Yours faithfully,

F. AUSTIN HYDE.

The Grove, Pickering.

LATEST RELEASES.

Messrs. Samuel French announce a number of interesting new releases, which should prove popular in the coming season. These include:—

"Other People's Lives," by A. A. Milne. (2 interior scenes and a cast of 5 men and 5 women).

"Indoor Fireworks," a farcical comedy by Arthur Macrae. (1 interior scene and a cast of 4 men and 6 women).

"Birthday," by Rodney Ackland. (1 interior scene and a cast of 5 men and 8 women).

"Admirals All," by Ian Hay and Stephen King-Hall. (3 scenes and a cast of 16 men and 5 women).

"Queen of Scots," by Gordon Daviot. (10 scenes and a cast of 20 men—some parts can be doubled—and 6 women).

The performing royalty in each case is £5 5 0.

NEW PREMISES FUND

WE have pleasure in printing the second list of donors to the New Premises Fund. It includes the names of all those who have subscribed since the last list was printed up to and including May 21. In spite of an excellent response from our members we are still short of the £2,000 originally asked for, and consequently the list will remain open for further contributions.

	£	s.	d.
Viscount Hambleden	25	0	0
Richard Collett	5	5	0
Edward Lewis	5	5	0
Essex County D.S.	3	3	0
Walter Payne, O.B.E.	3	3	0
Players Club, Beaconsfield	3	3	0
The Questors	2	17	6
Altrincham Garrick Society	2	2	0
Blackfriars Society	2	2	0
Bristol Playgoers' Club	2	2	0
Crescent Players	2	2	0
G.P.O. Players	2	2	0
John Hampden	2	2	0
Manchester Repertory Theatre	2	2	0
1920 Club, St. Andrews	2	2	0
Royal Exchange Players	2	2	0
Colonel Sir John Shute, C.M.G., D.S.O., M.P.	2	2	0
Walter Sinclair	2	2	0
Un-Named Society, Manchester	2	2	0
Dr. F. S. Boas	2	0	0
Mr. & Mrs. Eriksen	2	0	0
Leamington & Warwick D.S.C.	1	5	0
Bristol Group, per Mrs. Rogers	1	11	3
Alton O. & D.S.	1	1	0
Eric Barber	1	1	0
Rev. Seaward Beddow, B.A.	1	1	0
Boston Playgoers' Society	1	1	0
Cardiff L. & D. Club	1	1	0
Cyril Chantler	1	1	0
Cheltenham O. & D.S.	1	1	0
T. Hannam-Clark	1	1	0
D. Hadyn Davies	1	1	0
E. P. Dickin	1	1	0
Ditton Players	1	1	0
Donnybrook Parish D.S. (Dublin)	1	1	0
Miss N. C. Fisher	1	1	0
Florence Moore Players, Brighton	1	1	0
Gidea Park D.S.	1	1	0
Miss Mary C. Greene	1	1	0
Guild of Abbey Players	1	1	0
Harpden Group	1	1	0
"His Master's Voice" A.D.S.	1	1	0
Miss Frances A. S. Holbrow	1	1	0
Leeds Schools Music & Drama League	1	1	0
Miss Helen G. Liddle	1	1	0
Little Theatre Players	1	1	0
Lyons Club A.D.S.	1	1	0
Marlybone D.S.	1	1	0
E. C. Matthews	1	1	0
Merstham A.D.S.	1	1	0
Midland Bank D.S.	1	1	0
Miss Doris J. Miller	1	1	0
Miss Doreen Morton	1	1	0
Miss Fay Myddleton	1	1	0
National Provincial Bank D.S.	1	1	0
Penrith Players	1	1	0
Play & Pageant Union (Hampstead)	1	1	0

	£	s.	d.
Richmond Thespian Club	1	1	0
St. Andrew's (Muswell Hill) D.S.	1	1	0
Sevenoaks Players	1	1	0
F. Sladen-Smith	1	1	0
Stockport Sunday School O. & D.S.	1	1	0
Mrs. Granville Streatfeild	1	1	0
Trevescan A.D.C.	1	1	0
S. Vagliano	1	1	0
Miss E. B. Wainwright	1	1	0
Westovian D.S.	1	1	0
Mrs. Penelope Wheeler	1	1	0
J. Fisher White	1	1	0
Angus Wilson	1	1	0
Woldingham Players	1	1	0
Hubert Wood	1	1	0
Robert Young	1	1	0
Miss Hilda F. Ball	1	0	0
Mrs. V. E. L. Brown	1	0	0
Miss Stephanie Cotton	1	0	0
Mrs. Dearle	1	0	0
Fleetwood A.D.S.	1	0	0
Mrs. Fletcher-Lee	1	0	0
Miss Audrey Frere	1	0	0
Freshford Players	1	0	0
Guernsey A.D. & O.C.	1	0	0
Mrs. D. M. Hutton	1	0	0
Francis James	1	0	0
R. A. S. Jermyn	1	0	0
Miss Lees	1	0	0
Naomi Sansom Players	1	0	0
Royal Aircraft Establishment D.S.	1	0	0
Mrs. J. L. Simpson	1	0	0
South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall)	1	0	0
Miss L. B. Thomson	1	0	0
Miss J. M. Welch	1	0	0
Argosy Players	10	6	
Bearsden D.C.	10	6	
B.I. Players	10	6	
Chesterfield Playgoers	10	6	
Cleethorpes A.D.S.	10	6	
Durham A.D.S.	10	6	
Mrs. W. Foulds	10	6	
Gainsborough D.G.	10	6	
Holsworthy D.S.	10	6	
Mr. & Mrs. Edward R. Lingard	10	6	
Lionel Millard	10	6	
Old Cravonians D.C.	10	6	
Palmers Green Players A.D.S.	10	6	
Preston Scientific Society	10	6	
Miss Cecily Radford	10	6	
Swansea Y.M.C.A. Players	10	6	
A. O. Terry	10	6	
West Central Jewish Girls' Club	10	6	
Admiralty D.S.	10	0	
Miss Barlow	10	0	
Bawtry A.D.S.	10	0	
Birkenhead Gas Department Social Club (Dramatic Section)	10	0	
Bywell W.I. (Dramatic Section)	10	0	
Central School, St. Albans	10	0	
Chingford Senior Boys' School D.S.	10	0	
Chipstead Players	10	0	
Clapton D.S.	10	0	
Cockermouth W.E.A. Players	10	0	
Dartington Players	10	0	
Entwistle Players	10	0	
Forest Players	10	0	

NEW PREMISES FUND

	£	s.	d.
Godalming Playreading Circle	10	0	
Mrs. Conyngham Green	10	0	
Miss J. M. Conyngham Green	10	0	
Hertford Library D.R.C.	10	0	
Hoddesdon A.D.S.	10	0	
Miss Margaret Johnson	10	0	
Miss Netty M. Lunan	10	0	
Maidstone D.S.	10	0	
Manchester Area Federation of Towns- women's Guilds	10	0	
Minlake A.D.S.	10	0	
Oakleigh Players	10	0	
Miss M. E. Peake	10	0	
Playreading Circle (Welwick House, King's Lynn)	10	0	
Reactors	10	0	
St. Andrews University D.S.	10	0	
St. Neots Players	10	0	
St. Oswald's D.S.	10	0	
Silverdale Village Players	10	0	
Sutton Coldfield Playreading Circle	9	0	
"Nabies" A.D.S.	7	6	
Old Godolphin Players	7	6	
St. Mary's College (Bangor) D.S.	7	6	
Abney Players	5	0	
Accrington Teachers' D.S.	5	0	
Adlington (Lancs.) Congregational Players	5	0	
Miss E. M. Atkinson	5	0	
Miss E. M. Ballantyne	5	0	
Miss Alice Blanchard	5	0	
British Federation of University Women (Sussex Branch)	5	0	
Caerwys V.D.S.	5	0	
Central Hall D.S.	5	0	
Chester-le-Street Secondary School Old Students' Association	5	0	
Churchdown D.S.	5	0	
Convent of the Holy Child L. & D.S.	5	0	
George Creed	5	0	
Miss Joan Dakin	5	0	
Exeter Insurance Players	5	0	
Fellow Players	5	0	
Forty Club D.S.	5	0	
Garrick Players	5	0	
Guildhouse Players	5	0	
Guild of King Alfred Players	5	0	
Hele's School D.S.	5	0	
Miss Edna C. Houghton	5	0	
Hygram Players, Kettering	5	0	
Miss Maysel Jenkinson	5	0	
Miss Minnie L. Kendall	5	0	
Marcham P.R.S.	5	0	
Mrs. Martindale	5	0	
Middleton Junction Methodist A.D.S.	5	0	
Milham Ford School Old Girls' D.C.	5	0	
Montague D.S., Bristol	5	0	
Montgomeryshire Federation of W.I.'s	5	0	
Old Swindonians' Assn. (Dramatic Section)	5	0	
Mr. Howard Peacey	5	0	
Rachel McMillan Training College D.S.	5	0	
Mrs. A. Charles Rowland	5	0	
St. Leonard's D.S., Streatham	5	0	
St. Mildred's D. & L.S.	5	0	
Salisbury Players	5	0	
Street Ancient & Modern Playreaders	5	0	
Miss Lilian Smee	5	0	
Stewart Group	5	0	
Miss Kathleen Stone	5	0	

	£	s.	d.
Tamaritans, Plymouth	5	0	
Turk's Head Club	5	0	
Wareham A.D.S.	5	0	
Mrs. T. H. Watson	5	0	
West Horsley D.S.	5	0	
Wolsingham A.D.S.	5	0	
Miss K. Bainbridge-Bell	2	6	
W. S. Scholfield	2	6	

Previously acknowledged 190 2 3
376 16 9

Total £566 19 0

VILLAGE DRAMA SECTION PLAYWRITING COMPETITION

1935

ONCE again I have to thank the judges, Dr. Gordon Bottomley and Mrs. Penelope Wheeler, for their very great kindness in judging the plays. They have both devoted a great deal of time to the work, in spite of the many claims on their time, and we appreciate enormously the help they give us. I hope to announce the particulars of the next competition shortly.

JANET SCRUTTON.

LIST OF AWARDS.

CLASS I. Translation.

Prize and recommendation for publication :
"A Charm for the Devil," translated from
Hans Sachs, by Vervaine (Miss E. Oules).

CLASS II. One-Act Comedy.

Prize. "T'Second Time of Asking," by
Sophia (Mr. George Taylor).

Honourable Mention. "Trampled Roses," by
Penelope (Mrs. F. E. Howard).
"Captain Treloar's Choice," by Mary
Kelynack (Miss Winifred Paynter).

CLASS III. One-Act Serious Play.

Prize and recommendation for publication :
"Black Harvest," by Arisaig (Mr. John
Odams).

Honourable Mention : "Life's Day," by Pris-
cilla (Mrs. Entwistle).
"Father Pierre," by Inconnu (Miss Gwen
Thorner).

CLASS IV. One-Act Romantic or Poetic.

Prize and recommendation for publication :
"Captivity," by Deva (Mrs. E. Lloyd
Barritt).

VILLAGE PLAYWRITING COMPETITION

Honourable Mention :

"Maid's Judgment," by Horatius (Miss M. Ashworth).

CLASS V. Full-Length Play.

Prize and recommendation for publication :

"Rose Lane," by Bernard Berry (Miss Edith Howes, New Zealand).

Honourable Mention :

"Pastime," by Paganus (Rev. G. de Y. Aldridge).

Best Play in the Competition :

"CAPTIVITY," by Deva.

JUDGES' REPORT.

The Adjudicators in this Competition, in submitting their report, have to note that, in a gratifying number of entries, there is a large proportion which indicate in their writers an innocent heedlessness of the requirements of village drama. Without attempting to lay down rigid limitations in this respect, workers in this area are agreed that there are certain things which by their very choice shew ignorance of village needs, and which if successful would be destructive of the countryside culture which it is these workers' aim to promote; and the imagination which must be present in every good play must, on this occasion, be shewn equally in the choice of theme. In our own day, the village theatre has become a reality: and it thrives in proportion as those who work for it understand its difference from the older urban theatre as well as its likeness to it.

In addition, a much higher general level of skill is noticeable in the works submitted; the majority of competitors shew a better understanding of what a play should be (and, quite often, of what a play should not be) than they did ten years ago. At the same time, we are bound to remark that the outstanding play does not occur as often as it did then. In the early years of this competition several plays were premiated which have been widely used in the Community movement since then, and which by now can be claimed as of something like classic quality. We are not getting that quality now: but this year has brought forward several useful and able pieces of work that we have pleasure in putting forward for prizes in their respective classes.

CLASS I.

TRANSLATION FROM ANY EUROPEAN LANGUAGE.

An adaptation of a farce by Labiche and Martin, "Dust In the Eyes," by "Binker" is not a very good choice among the works of these lively writers, and its

execution is inadequate; but it indicates an excellent quarry for an expert translator. The rest of this class consists of entries of items from those Whitsun plays by Hans Sachs whose merits have already been recognised in these Competitions. Of these the two submitted by "A. O. Rangi" are not very skilfully done, and the translator's belief that Sachs' verse is "doggerel" has resulted in a doggerel quite unlike his—and unequal to representing his verse. The third—"A Charm for the Devil" by "Vervain" ranks very high in this kind of work. The original suits our modern ideas and purposes more completely than much of Sachs' work; and the execution of this version is on a high level—the verse being rendered with a sensitive technique that never shews how the translator's difficulties have been so completely surmounted.

CLASS II.

ONE-ACT COMEDY.

The Comedy Class in these Competitions is usually the most popular one, and the strongest: this year it is almost the weakest, with no entry of a really salient kind. After noting promising beginnings that lose movement and fade—such as "Rain After Tea" by "Miss Bates" (which could not be used in any village where there is a Vicarage, or cast convincingly in any village that is not a town-suburb); and the numerous examples where well-written conversations never develop into a play—of which the best is "A Man of His Word," by "Kettlesing"; there are three pieces of a more positive merit to be referred to.

"Trampled Roses" by "Penelope" is perhaps rather too easy in both conception and execution; but it is also amusing and ingenious and shapely, with a touch of feeling and some simple characterisation that would give useful acting experience all round. It receives Honourable Mention. "Captain Treloar's Choice," by Mary Kelynack, requires its audience to accept the very shiny convention that a sea-captain can be taken in by everyone except his crew. It also has the disadvantage of an opening soliloquy; but when these drawbacks are surmounted, this is a fairly complete play, bustling on amusingly and having a lively and rather skilful ensemble scene as its climax. The whole would afford justifiable, legitimate amusement to an indulgent audience, and good acting experience to a not very advanced cast. It receives Honourable Mention. "T'Second Time of Asking" by "Sophia" finds an equally simple, but a more subtle vein of comedy in a pensive, rather serious little world of everyday reality, and deserves more serious consideration than any other entry in this Class. The father and daughter are admirable; the final situation is delightful, and the old man's working up to it has great ingenuity. There is excellent conversation, in a dialect that is not over-elaborated; but the early part of the play is far too exclusively conversation, and the hero is characterless and far too passive.

CLASS III.

ONE-ACT SERIOUS PLAY.

Writers in this Class this year seem to be under some special influence to depict something static and without inner development. One writer reconstitutes that last scene in Captain Scott's tent near the South Pole, and presents the Captain Oates situation; his aim seems to be a photograph in time—but he gets nothing out of it for himself or his audience. Another reconstitutes the last scene in a coal-mine on the day when



SCENE FROM "THE TEMPEST" AS RECENTLY
PRODUCED AT THE SLOANE SCHOOL, CHELSEA.
Reproduced by courtesy of Mr. Guy Boas.



SCENE FROM "AUTUMN CROCUS" BY
C. L. ANTHONY AS PRODUCED BY
THE WICKHAM PLAYERS.

VILLAGE PLAYWRITING COMPETITION

an explosion is to happen: by various detail-scenes the nature of daily life in a mine is made clear enough—but again nothing comes out of it. There is the explosion: then the play has to stop.

Emerging from a good deal of unimaginative earnestness, there are three plays that deserve a more detailed consideration. "Life's Day," by "Priscilla" still relies too much on a photographic element, and too much conversation. In this case, however, these are controlled by a sense of design: there is an inner spiritual movement, a perspective, a shaping into an artistic harmony that have a good deal of promise. It receives Honourable Mention. "Father Pierre," by "Inconnu" is more of a play, with conflict, development, and an admirable climax moving admirably to a swift close. The centre scene is a weak place, the priest needs to be brought into the conversation; and the language is unreal and too "pretty." Because the people of the play are French they are made to speak as though the play were rather formally translated from the French—which is not good logic: but this play of a Breton fisherman's wife and the proscribed village priest during the French Revolution has great merit, and only needs to be written in a simpler style and tightened up a little in its "development section" to become an attractive and picturesque piece of work and an admirable competition piece. It receives Honourable Mention. "Black Harvest," by "Arisaig" is perhaps a rather highly coloured picture of the life of fisherfolk and peasants on the West Coast of Ireland; but it carries a feeling of authenticity. It also gives scope for good staging of a picturesque kind.

CLASS IV.

ONE-ACT ROMANTIC OR POETIC PLAY (TRAGEDY OR COMEDY).

Whatever difficulties and problems inhere in play-writing are found in their most intense and complex developments in this order of play; and it is precisely in this order of play that make-believe, laziness, incompetence and insincerity seem to choose to spread themselves by preference. Romance and poetry appear to be regarded as excuses for cloudy thinking, and the negation of thought—the glib flow of language, the "atmospheric" evasion of characterisation, the mysterious stranger from somewhere undescribed, the use of too-often used romantic characters that, in essence, pay for the effect they produce with an I.O.U. that it is no one's business to honour: these things reproduce themselves every season, and are always with us, and always have to be discounted before the adjudicator can see the trees for the wood. Fortunately there are one or two shapely trees this year that remain to reward them. "Maid's Judgment," by "Horatius," a play of the aftermath of Monmouth's Rebellion has adequate characterisation and movement, and is written with a quiet pleasantness of diction and cadence that would lend itself to good acting and be agreeable to listen to—though the dialogue might be more arresting and distinguished, and the opening has too much retrospective explanation. The element of suspense and surprise in the latter part swings the play into a better movement: the crisis is well gripped, and shews the purpose the action has been steadily mounting to. If the opening underwent some revision and compression this would be an attractive and popular piece. It receives Honourable Mention. "The Alternative," by "Deva" has too many of the characteristics of a novel in dialogue: the interest is too equal throughout; the repetitions of narration do not achieve the movement

and tension needed for a play; but this handling of a modern problem in the terms of a little-known ancient civilisation is attractive and picturesque, and makes excellent reading—and it deserves mention here and a word of praise on account of its having been entered by the same writer as the best play in the section—"Captivity," also by "Deva." This play of Israel's Captivity and of Daniel in Babylon shews all the gift of the other play for interpreting and handling an ancient civilisation and for vividly imagining its people; but here they are understandingly put at the service of real and urgent drama, and a shapely, excellent play is the result. There are great opportunities for colour and Eastern gorgeousness, enough to satisfy any designer's heart; every part is a good acting part, and the subject is well enough known to enable the actors to turn every minute of the play to advantage and pack it with imagination. An improbability in the centre of play, where Miriam forgets that she has taken a prisoner and stowed him (bound) behind a curtain a moment before, ought to be modified or made more plausible; but this slight flaw would not spoil the play in performance, and on every count—vivid, lively, clever dialogue, vital characterisation, scenic potentialities—this play receives a prize and a Recommendation for Publication. "The Thorn-Tree," by "Osier" is disqualified for a change of scene.

CLASS V.

A FULL-LENGTH PLAY (TO PLAY TWO HOURS).

Historical themes relied on to save working out the theme: domestic "histories" where a time-process is relied on as a substitute for dramatic interest. These are present, as usual, but they have been put further out of court than usual by two plays of bygone days in the Colonies—both written with first-hand knowledge of the surroundings, and with real instinct for the drama in the theme: and both welcome for their enlargement of subject-matter, and the touch of imagination in them. "Hill Magic," by "Tom-Tit-Tot" treats of Canada in the '80's; it deserves a word of praise for its interesting opening, but the theme is too much for the author as yet; the play loses its sense of direction first, and, following that, its movement, and thus comes lamely to its end—but it has potentialities. "Rose Lane," by "Bernard Berry" handles an Australian gold-rush in the '50's. It is an unambitious play that looks to 19th Century melodrama for its method—but it differs from its model in that everybody and everything is first-hand, the speech is natural and well-imagined; and there is an odd directness everywhere that is as good as originality. The people are warm and likeable human beings, giving their players good opportunities: the setting is just old-fashioned enough to make a picturesque attraction: the play is a competent and likeable work, and the writer's personal outlook deserves encouragement. It receives a prize and a Recommendation for Publication. In addition to these a comedy of West-Country farm-life, "Pastime," by "Paganus" receives Honourable Mention for a delightful vein of humour and some rustic characterisation that becomes almost classic in the farmer. Its plot is too easy and relies too much on repetitions of mesmerism to be interesting, and this will need to be toned down and varied if the players are to do their best and receive the full reward for quite delightful labours.

PENELOPE WHEELER.
GORDON BOTTOMLEY.

SIXTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE.

To be presented at the Annual General Meeting 1935 to be held at 9, Fitzroy Square, W.1., IN submitting the Sixteenth Annual Report of the British Drama League, the Council are able to report another year of progress. On June 30th, 1934, the League's membership stood at 3,732, it is now 3,800 so that the net increase is 68. During the year 807 new members have joined. There have been 739 resignations. The number of affiliated societies now on the register is 2546.

NEW PREMISES.

During the past year it became evident that the library service was being seriously hampered by lack of space both for staff and books, and expansion was impossible at 8, Adelphi Terrace. At the same time the Council was aware that new premises would have to be found for the Costume Department the lease of whose house at New Cross was running out, the house itself being very inconveniently situated. These factors led the Council to consider whether it would not be wise to seek new premises under one roof both for the Head Quarters of the League and for the Costume Department. In the event such premises have been found and the freehold purchased at No. 9, Fitzroy Square, W.1., whither it is hoped that the League will be removed in time for the Annual Meeting.

The purchase of the freehold has been made possible by the generous donation of £1,000 received from the Pilgrim Trust, and by loans and a mortgage up to the balance of the purchase price of £6,400. Towards the amount necessary for the reconstruction and equipment of the premises the thanks of the Council are due to the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust who have offered a grant of £500, and also to members and friends of the League whose contributions have been duly acknowledged in "Drama."

While regretting the departure from Adelphi Terrace which has so finely served to shelter the League during the critical years of its expansion from 1925 to the present year, the Council believes that the acquisition of a house of its own will serve the best interests of the League and that the various amenities of the new building will commend the project to members both in London and elsewhere.

NATIONAL THEATRE.

As already widely announced, the Shakespeare Memorial National Theatre Committee has initiated a new effort to establish a National Theatre. A special Appeal Committee has been set up of which the Director of the League is the Hon. Secretary. The Council notes with pleasure these signs of new activity, and has been glad to co-operate with the Appeal Committee by offering to place the Committee in touch with those members of the League or of its affiliated societies whose help the Committee may wish to invoke from time to time.

AUTUMN CONFERENCE.

The Autumn Conference of members and affiliated societies was held at Halifax from October 26th to 28th by kind invitation of the Halifax Thespians.

On the Friday evening delegates were welcomed by the Mayor of Halifax in the Alexandra Hall after which an address was given by Herr Ernst Toller. On Saturday, the 27th, the Business Meeting was held under the chairmanship of Mr. Geoffrey Whitworth. The minutes of this meeting were printed in the December number of "Drama." On the evening of the same day a performance was given by the Halifax Thespians of "The Rumour" by C. K. Munro. The play was preceded by a largely attended dinner also in the Alexandra Hall and presided over by Mr. J. W. Sutcliffe, at which Miss Edith Craig and Mr. Harold Rothery spoke. On Sunday a special service was held in the Halifax Parish Church at which a sermon was delivered by Bishop Frodsham. In the afternoon the delegates visited the Brontë country and home at Haworth, and a talk was given by Phyllis Bentley, after tea at the Black Bull, Haworth, on the work of the Brontës.

The thanks of the Council are due to Mr. B. L. Sutcliffe and to the Committee of the Halifax Thespians for the excellent arrangements for the Conference and also to the various hosts and hostesses who gave hospitality to the delegates.

A new feature of the Conference was a meeting of those interested in Village work presided over by Miss Mary Kelly. This meeting was held on the Friday afternoon before the opening of the Conference and many important matters connected with Rural work were discussed.

ENTERTAINMENT TAX.

The Council is glad to report that the co-operation between the British Drama League and the Stage and Allied Arts Defence League has been so far successful that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has announced certain reductions in Entertainment Tax to commence on July 1st. This is to be regarded as a considerable step towards the total abolition of the tax, and the Council desires to thank those members of the League who were good enough to co-operate in pressing the claim of the Theatre on the notice of Parliament.

LICENSING OF THEATRES.

Following a resolution passed at the Halifax Conference, the Council appointed a special Committee to investigate the conditions made by the authorities for the licensing of theatres and halls for theatrical performances. This committee consisted of Mr. A. E. J. Emmet (Hon. Secretary), Mr. Horace Collins (representing the Society of West-End Managers), Miss Edith Neville, Mr. Harold Ridge, and Mr. Geoffrey Whitworth. A questionnaire has been circulated throughout the League's membership of affiliated societies inviting information particularly as regards conditions as to exits, stage lighting, etc. 268 replies have been received, and a report will be circulated in due course. The Council notes that this enquiry coincides with the issue by the Home Office of a memorandum entitled "The Licensing of Theatres," which is of much interest as indicating the official attitude to the whole question.

DRAMA SCHOOLS, 1934-35.

Seven full-length Schools have been held during the past twelve months, and four shorter schools or courses. Attendance at all the schools has been good, and at the summer schools shows a marked increase on previous years. The outstanding feature of the year was the Scarborough Summer School, which was on a larger scale than any previous school. The experiment was more than fully justified by its success. At most of the schools there has been more group-work among the students, which has resulted in their receiving more individual attention, both in production and acting. At the longer schools there have been practical courses in the actual making of properties, costumes, scenery, and lighting sets. The experiment is being made of dividing the courses into advanced and elementary sections, but it appears, so far, that students prefer to attend both sections.

Dates, and numbers of registered students were as follows:—Welwyn; May 28th to June 3rd; 34 students. Leicester; June 4th to 9th; 78 students. Scarborough; August 3rd to 18th; 153 students. Leamington; August 31st to September 10th; 72 students. Canning Town; Course (Junior Drama); October and November; 56 students. Children's Lecture Course; January; 15 students. London Easter School; April 4th to 14th; 71 students. Liverpool; April 26th to May 4th; 76 students. Birmingham; May 17th to 26th; 116 students. 1-day School at Stafford; November 22nd; 52 students. 3-day School at Brighton (with R.C.C.); November 6th to 8th; 34 students. Week-end School, Northumberland; November 29th and 30th; 32 students.

Lecturers include:—Miss Anny Boalth, Mr. Seaward Beddow, Mr. Rodney Bennett, Mr. Harold Brady, Miss Isabel Chisman, Mr. Arthur Coe, Mrs. Nesfield Cookson, Mr. John Fernald, Mr. Tyrone Guthrie, Miss Margaret Halstan, Mr. Tom Harrison, Mr. Rupert Harvey, Mrs. Enid Hermes, Miss Margaret Hill, Mr. John Izon, Mr. Stephen Jack, Mr. Evan John, Miss Mary Kelly, Miss Elizabeth Loe, Miss Molly Macarthur, Miss Frances Mackenzie, Mr. Norman Marshall, Miss Irene Mawer, Mr. Gerard Middleditch, Mr. Robert Newton, Mr. Sladen-Smith, Mr. Richard Southern, Mr. Robert Speaight, Miss Gwyneth Thurburn, Mr. Ernst Toller, Miss Margaret Webster, Mrs. Penelope Wheeler, Mr. Geoffrey Whitworth, Mr. and Mrs. Angus Wilson. Mr. John Geilgud gave the opening address at the London Easter School.

LECTURES AND ADJUDICATIONS.

A large number of lectures and adjudications and productions have been given through the instrumentality of the League. This work has been undertaken among others by Mr. Geoffrey Whitworth, Miss Mary Kelly, Miss Dorothy Crosse, Miss Barbara Seymour, Mr. John Bourne, Mr. Robert Newton, Mr. Arthur Ewart, Miss Frances Mackenzie, Mr. Martin Browne, Mr. F. Sladen-Smith, Mrs. E. R. Lingard, Mr. Alfred Emmet, Mr. Loftus Wigram, Mr. C. Harold Ridge, Mr. G. Middleditch, Miss E. Loe.

BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE COSTUME DEPARTMENT.

In the past year the number of costumes in the wardrobe has been increased chiefly in the Tudor, Restoration and Early Victorian periods. Arrangements have been made with various firms which enable the Department to obtain all necessary accessories to costumes on behalf of members so that it is now possible to procure through the Department, Costumes, Wigs, Weapons, footgear, armour and other accessories with the minimum amount of trouble and expense to the hirer. It is hoped that after the move to the new and larger premises, it will be possible to offer to members better service than has been practicable under past conditions.

BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE COMMUNITY THEATRE FESTIVAL.

The tenth Community Theatre Festival was organised by the Central Festival Committee consisting of Mr. Geoffrey Whitworth (Chairman), Miss Mary Kelly, Mr. C. Harold Ridge, Mr. C. B. Purdom, Mr. George O. Sharman, Mr. S. N. Whitehead (Hon. Treasurer), Miss Frances Briggs (Secretary) with the addition of the following who were appointed representatives of the five areas into which Great Britain is divided for the purposes of the Festival:—Mr. John Hirst and Mr. B. L. Sutcliffe (Northern Area), Mr. C. M. Haines and Mr. W. Bushill Matthews (Western Area), Miss F. Smith and Mr. A. E. J. Emmet (Eastern Area), Mr. Walter Cuthbert and Mr. D. Glen MacKemmie (Scottish Area), Mr. D. T. Morris and Mrs. C. P. Williams (Welsh Area).

This year the entries amounted to 650, an increase of 92 over the entries in the 1934 Festival. Divisional and Area Festivals were held during March, April and May, preliminary judging having been undertaken previously. The judges appointed for the Area Finals were Miss Lena Ashwell for the Eastern Area, Miss Craig for the Welsh Area, Mr. Norman Page for the Northern Area, and Mr. Iden Payne for the Western Area, this final again being held at the Memorial Theatre, Stratford-on-Avon. The Judge appointed by the Scottish Community Drama Association for the Scottish Final was Mr. C. Harold Ridge. Preliminary Judges were Mr. F. Sladen-Smith, Mr. Robert Newton, Miss Edith Craig, Miss Margaret Halstan, Mr. John Fernald, Mr. John Bourne, Mr. C. Harold Ridge, Mr. Edward Lewis, Mr. Sydney Box, Mrs. Errock, Mr. Richard Southern, Mr. Michael Watts, Mr. Robert Speaight, Mr. E. Martin Browne, Mr. H. C. G. Stevens, Mrs. Abbott, Miss Margaret Webster.

A full report of the Festival was printed in the May number of "Drama." The final Festival was held at the Old Vic on May 27th, the Howard de Walden Cup being presented by Miss Flora Robson to the winning team, the Welwyn Thaliens. The Judges were Mr. Lewis Casson and Mr. Tyrone Guthrie. Miss Charlotte Bacon obtained the award for the best original unpublished play entered in the Festival, "Created He Them"; and Mr. George Grimaldi for the best unpublished play by a new author, "Circumstantial Evidence." The Judge was Mr. H. F. Rubinstein.

The Council desires to acknowledge the invaluable help given throughout the Festival by the various Area and Divisional Committees without which the organisation of the Festival would be impossible.

THE LIBRARY.

The Library Committee are pleased to report further progress in the development of the Library. 2,185 volumes have been added during the past year, bringing the total number of volumes acquired

by the Library since its inception to 30,207. This figure includes the replacement of some 2,980 volumes which have at various times since 1925 become too worn for further use or have been lost. The actual number of volumes now in the Library is therefore 27,227.

The following statistics of books issued during the year are interesting, as a proof that members of the League appreciate the value of the Library and make full use of it. The total number of issues during the year was 36,810. Of this number 24,473 were plays from the Lending Library. 2,289 were critical works, and 10,048 were reading sets. The increase in the number of reading sets sent out was 1681.

The demand for reading sets increases each year and it is interesting to compare the number issued during the past year with the 5,297 issued in 1930. In this connection it is gratifying to note the growing use made of the Library by the repertory companies.

By a special arrangement with the National Council of Social Service sets of plays have been loaned to *bona fide* Unemployed Centres unaffiliated to the League. This service has been much appreciated.

The Library Committee wish to express their gratitude to Lady Playfair for the gift of the collection of plays and books on the theatre from the Library of the late Sir Nigel Playfair; also to Sir Barry Jackson and Miss Foote and others for books, and to Mrs. Cecile Ball for an interesting collection of theatre programmes.

In the death of Sir Nigel Playfair last year the Library Committee suffered a great loss. Sir Nigel had been a member of the Committee for many years and had always taken an interest in the progress of the Library, to which he had helped considerably by his knowledge and advice.

DIALECT COMMITTEE.

The Council regrets that it was found impossible to complete the series of 24 records by the Autumn of 1934 as was anticipated in the last Annual Report. Difficulties were encountered in the recording of certain of the dialects, but now they are all in hand, and failing any unforeseen hindrance, publication will be made in the Autumn of the present year.

BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE DIARY.

Arrangements have been made with Messrs. Charles Letts & Company to issue, on behalf of the League, a Theatrical Pocket Calendar under the title of "The Playlover's Diary." Besides a foreword to be contributed by Miss Marie Tempest, the diary will contain full particulars of the British Drama League, a directory of the principal stage organisations, legal notes as to the licensing of stage plays, theatres, etc., and other matters of interest to members of the theatrical profession, amateurs, and the general public of theatre-goers. The diary will be issued in two styles: in cloth at 1s., and in leather at 3s. 6d.

RUSSIAN TOUR.

In August, 1934, the British Drama League organised a special tour to visit the Moscow Theatre Festival. Mr. Geoffrey Whitworth conducted the tour, which was greatly appreciated by all those who took part in it. This year a similar tour is being arranged under the leadership of Mr. Lewis Casson.

VILLAGE DRAMA SECTION.

The incorporation of the Village Drama Society in the British Drama League has now been made permanent, and the Village Drama Committee has been reconstituted to include six members nominated by the County Committees, six nominated by the B.D.L. Council, and six by the outgoing V.D. Committee. There are 342 village societies affiliated through this Section, 22 County Committees and 21 other Federations working in the country. One more R.C.C. has come into the County Committee scheme, making 12 in all, and two new Committees have been formed, in Westmorland and West Suffolk. Others are under consideration. These Committees are becoming increasingly valuable in giving a sound basis to the work of the Village Players. The V.D. Committee brought out a new Village Play List last autumn. The eleventh Playwriting Competition has just been judged. A Village Drama Conference took place at Halifax on October 26th, 1934. The following have adjudicated in District and W.I. Festivals in the counties: Mr. John Bourne, Miss Eleanor Elder, Mrs. Errock, Mrs. Egerton Hine, Miss Kelly, Miss Mackenzie, Mr. Robert Newton, Mrs. Marion Rathbone, and Mr. F. Sladen-Smith.

JUNIOR DRAMA COMMITTEE.

Chairman: Mr. E. Stuart Monro. Secretary: Miss Mary Kelly. This Committee has organised Courses of Instruction at Ebury Bridge and Canning Town. The Carnegie Trustees have guaranteed such Courses against loss until the end of 1935, and further courses are being arranged in London and other towns. A Junior Drama Festival for London next year is under consideration.

AFRICAN DRAMA COMMITTEE.

Secretary: Miss Mary Kelly. The Third Conference on African Drama was held in London on July 27th, 1934. Papers were read by Miss Ruby Ginner and Mr. Robert Newton. Mrs. Paul Robeson spoke a few words, and Mr. Robeson, who was unable to be present, expressed his sympathy with this work. A Report of the Conference has been prepared, but it has not yet been possible to print this for lack of funds. For the first time the Conference was attended by a number of African students and professional men and women, who joined in an enthusiastic discussion at the end of the meeting.

MEMORANDUM ON THE TEACHING OF DRAMA.

In response to an invitation received from the Adult Education Committee of the Board of Education, the Council appointed a special Committee to draw up a memorandum for submission to the Board of Education Committee responsible for the new Report on the Arts in Education now in preparation. The Drama League Committee consisted of Professor Lascelles Abercrombie, Mr. Kenneth Barnes, Mr. Frank Birch, Miss Elsie Fogerty, Miss Mary Kelly, Professor T. H. Searls, Professor J. Dover Wilson, and their report dealing with the teaching of Drama in classes conducted under the Board of Education is now in the hands of the Board.

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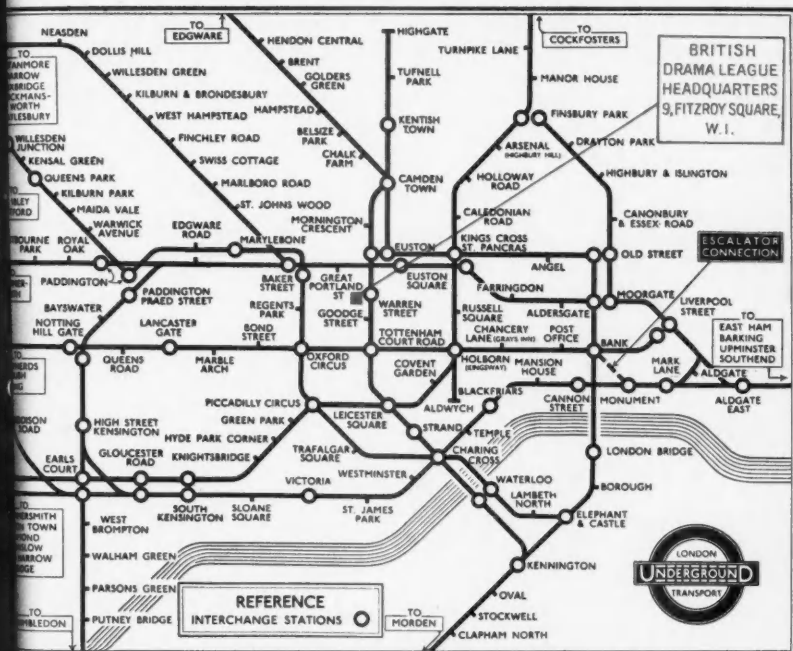
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